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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NICOSIA 000961

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SE, EUR/ERA, IO/UNP, ISN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNFICYP](#) [MOPS](#) [CY](#) [TU](#)

SUBJECT: LATEST UNFICYP THINKING ON DEMINING, REPORTING TO
SECURITY COUNCIL

Classified By: Ambassador Frank C. Urbancic, Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (SBU) The Ambassador on December 4 met with Wlodek Cibor, UNFICYP Senior Adviser and deputy to Taye-Brook Zerihoun, the UN Secretary General's Special Representative in Cyprus. Cibor was acting mission chief, as Zerihoun was in New York to brief the Security Council on UNFICYP operations and the Good Offices mission overseeing settlement negotiations.

Deminig -- Funding an Issue

¶2. (C) Ambassador asked Cibor for the latest state of play on demining efforts in the Buffer Zone. The UN diplomat responded that the demining operation is about 80 percent completed. It will require another \$5 million to complete, he said. The urgency to finish the work was highlighted by another incident on December 4, in which a family, reportedly Iraqi migrants and including children, had attempted to cross over from the north to the south and accidentally walked into a minefield. At least one person was seriously wounded, apparently losing a limb. Cibor said that Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat had flatly refused to use any of the European Union's 257 million-euro aid package destined for T/Cs to fund continued demining operations, which likely would halt in early 2009 without new financial support. Cibor said that he had been in touch with the Commission in Brussels in mid-November, and was told that the EU would not be willing to challenge Talat. Even though Talat was not representing an actual country, the Commission had said it could not disregard his views.

¶3. (C) Cibor was critical of the UN Development Program (UNDP), which manages the demining effort in Cyprus, for "wasting" almost a year without aggressively pursuing donor funding. Plan B for the UN now, therefore, was to go back to the Turkish- and Greek-Cypriots. He had already talked to Republic of Cyprus Presidential Adviser Leonidas Pantelides to see if the RoC would agree to support the effort financially, since it was to the advantage of all the people on the island to clear the mines -- and the RoC claimed jurisdiction over the whole island. It would be a great confidence-building measure as well, Cibor thought. If the UN can get a yes from the RoC, it will go back to the T/Cs for matching funds to fill any remaining gap. (Note: At the latest meeting of local P-5 chiefs of mission, the UK High Commissioner and French Ambassador had seemed willing to twist Talat's arm to get him to use EU money to fund 2009 demining operations, just as they had done last year for 2008 ops.)

Reporting from Cyprus -- Last Year for Unified Report

14. (C) Amplifying UN Special Adviser Alexander Downer's comments to the Ambassador in November, Cibor said that this December's report to the Secretary General will absolutely be the last joint political/peacekeeping report. Relations between DPKO and DPA in New York just aren't solid enough to allow for jointness. He stressed, however, that on the ground in Nicosia, these problems aren't occurring -- partly because the personalities work better together on the ground, and partly because the structure here already has Downer and Zerihoun at the top of the pyramid overseeing both UNFICYP and the UN Good Offices Mission. The Ambassador replied that the USG was not strongly inclined to support this reporting split, though Downer had indeed already mentioned that it was his preference. Downer had thought March would be a likely time for him to submit his first ad hoc report to the Council, and he was contemplating doing it from time to time, as glitches in the settlement negotiations arose. Cibor wondered whether the Council might be willing to ask Downer to submit regular statements on the progress achieved, say, at six-month intervals. He and the Ambassador eventually agreed, however, that opening this up to the Council might not lead to the desired outcome.

15. (C) The Ambassador committed to Cibor to report this latest UN thinking to Washington. He also posited that it might be better for Downer simply to announce to the two sides at their next meeting that he would begin reporting to the Council in, say, March and September. That way, nobody would be taken by surprise, and the Council would be receiving quarterly reports on the political talks (in March and September), and on peacekeeping operations (in June and December).

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